

Procedure for Field Experiences in First Steps

Date Approved by CSPD Committee: December 8, 2003

Date Approved by ICC: January 15, 2004

Date Approved by First Steps Administration: April 2, 2004

Background/Rationale:

1. **Capacity Building for First Steps** – (a) Opportunity for students across disciplines to learn about First Steps as a possible career option, (b) Opportunity for students across disciplines to learn about First Steps and become advocates for the program, (c) Pool of graduates across disciplines with applied experience in working with infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.
2. **Preparation of Students across Disciplines to Meet Recommended Practices in the Field** – (a) Part C state systems are required to have a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) that addresses the preservice preparation of individuals across disciplines to provide services in Part C programs; (b) Professional associations advocate that students in higher education programs have applied experiences across the age range and ability levels for which they are being prepared; (b) Further, professional associations recommend that field experiences be integrated throughout the higher education curriculum beginning with observation and progressing to more indepth application of skills.
3. **First Steps as the Major Provider of Infant/Toddler Services** – (a) First Steps is the only state administered infant/toddler program in the Commonwealth that requires that professionals possess the minimum highest qualifications for that discipline as a requirement for providing services; (b) As such, First Steps is the only consistent placement available to preservice programs for applied experiences with infants and toddlers; (c) Professional disciplines require that assignments for applied experiences be with individuals who are licensed in the respective discipline, in order for the required supervision to occur.
4. **Ability of Higher Education Programs to Meet Accreditation Standards** – (a) Accreditation standards in all disciplines require applied experiences in the field; (b) Accreditation standards typically require that applied experiences be across the age ranges and ability levels for which graduates are being prepared; (c) Failure to meet accreditation standards may result in program sanctions or actual closure of a program.

Field Experiences – Observation

Requirements of First Steps Service Providers:

1. Prior to the first student visit, obtain written permission from families for the student to observe. The permission would include: (a) permission for the named student to observe under supervision; (b) a statement that the student will maintain confidentiality regarding all aspects of the placement (i.e., discussions with the service provider; intervention sessions with the child, family and any

- other adults; written products); (c) permission for the university supervisor to observe, if required by the placement; and (d) a statement that permission for the observation is voluntary on the part of the family and can be revoked at any time. The First Steps service provider would maintain a file copy of this permission until the family indicates that they no longer give permission for such observations. Verbal approval would again be obtained immediately prior to the student's first observation.
2. Work with student to develop observation schedule.
 3. Provide student with basic factual information needed to observe the family consistent with FERPA and/or HIPPA.
 4. Complete documents required by the university/college program (e.g., documentation of time, rating forms).
 5. Arrange for "carpooling" with student, if appropriate.
 6. Remain in the room with the university student, child, family member(s), and/or other adults at all times during the intervention session that is being observed. If a professional discipline does not require that a supervisor be on-site 100% of the time, the First Steps provider cannot bill for time during which he/she is not on-site with the student.

Requirements of Students:

1. Maintain confidentiality in both verbal and written communication/products.
2. Participate at all scheduled times unless an emergency arises. In that case, the First Steps' service provider and the university supervisor must be notified immediately. Any missed time would be rescheduled at the convenience of the First Steps' service provider and the family.

Requirements of University Supervisors:

1. Arrange for the placement of the student, including any accommodations for disability, through the appropriate channels (i.e., agency contact or independent provider) to ensure adequate observation hours.
2. Provide an overview in writing to the cooperating service provider as to the purpose and expectations for the field placement.
3. Provide any documentation forms, rating forms, etc. that the service provider is asked to complete.
4. Explain confidentiality requirements to students.
5. Observe student, as appropriate, and provide an opportunity for the cooperating service provider to participate in the feedback session. Any observations would be arranged with the service provider in sufficient time for the family to be notified.

Field Experiences – Intervention Implemented by Student

Requirements of First Steps Service Providers:

1. Prior to the first student visit, obtain written permission from families for the student to assist with intervention. The permission would include: (a) permission for the named student to provide intervention under supervision; (b) a statement that the student will maintain confidentiality regarding all aspects of the placement (i.e., discussions with the service provider; intervention sessions with the child, family and any other adults; written products); (c) permission to audio or video record sessions, if required by the placement; (d) permission for the university supervisor to observe, if required by the placement; and (e) a statement that permission for the student to provide intervention under supervision is voluntary on the part of the family and can be revoked at any time. The First Steps service provider would maintain a file copy of this permission until the family indicates that they no longer give permission for such placements. Verbal approval would again be obtained immediately prior to the student's attendance at the first intervention session.
2. Work with student to develop field placement schedule.
3. Provide student with basic factual information about the child and family needed to plan and implement intervention sessions consistent with FERPA and/or HIPPA.
4. Allow students to read, with supervision, assessment reports, IFSPs and other documents essential to their ability to effectively plan and implement intervention sessions.
5. Assist students in planning and implementing intervention sessions. Provide direct, one-on-one supervision during any student implementation of intervention sessions.
6. Complete documents required by the university/college program (e.g., documentation of time, rating forms).
7. Arrange for "carpooling" with student, if appropriate.
8. (a) Complete and sign staff notes for each session in which the student facilitates intervention, including a statement in the staff note that direct, one-on-one supervision was provided during the intervention session; or (b) For sessions in which the intervention is facilitated by the student, review the student's staff note, add comments, and sign. Comments must include a statement that direct, one-on-one supervision was provided. The comments should also state that the staff note reflects what occurred during the intervention session and that the First Steps provider is in agreement with the content of the staff note.
9. Remain in the room with the university student, child, family member(s), and/or other adults at all times during the intervention session. If a professional discipline does not require that a supervisor be on-site 100% of the time, the First Steps provider cannot bill for time during which he/she is not on-site with the student.

Requirements of Students:

1. Maintain confidentiality in both verbal and written communication/products.
2. Participate at all scheduled times unless an emergency arises. In that case, the First Steps' service provider and the university supervisor must be notified immediately. Any missed time would be rescheduled at the convenience of the First Steps' service provider and the family.
3. Plan for intervention with the child and family and develop any written products with the assistance of the First Steps service provider.
4. Implement intervention with the assistance of and under the supervision of the First Steps provider in order to demonstrate competencies in the respective discipline.
5. Participate in feedback sessions with both the First Steps provider and the university supervisor.

Requirements of University Supervisors:

1. Arrange for the placement of the student, including any accommodations for disability, through the appropriate channels (i.e., agency contact or independent provider) to ensure adequate field hours.
2. Provide an overview in writing to the cooperating service provider as to the purpose and expectations for the field placement.
3. Provide any documentation forms, rating forms, etc. that the service provider is asked to complete.
4. Explain confidentiality requirements to students.
5. Observe student, as appropriate, and provide an opportunity for the cooperating service provider to participate in the feedback session. University supervision would be arranged with the service provider in sufficient time for the family to be notified.